

## **Grateful for our Freedom**

The month of July is a favorite time of year for my family. We are able to celebrate the birth of America, the sacrifices of our military men and women, and Utah's great pioneer heritage.

The hymn, America the Beautiful, has a stanza that goes, "O beautiful for Patriots dreams, that sees beyond the years." I often wonder if our founding fathers or pioneer ancestors ever imagined what great progress would come—beyond the years—from the foundations of freedom they prepared for us.

Our unique American formula of individual liberty and free enterprise has cultivated risk taking, experimentation, innovation, and scientific exploration on a grand scale that has never occurred anywhere before. In just the last 100 years American lives have improved far beyond what our founders could have imagined. Below is a list of just a few of the changes that have occurred. It is my hope that as you celebrate this season of independence and freedom you can take a moment to appreciate the benefits we enjoy due to the sacrifices of those before us.

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### **1900 to Today**

#### **I. Health**

- a. The death rate has fallen 95% since 1900 for children under 15
  - i. 1900 Infant mortality: 1 in 10    Today: 1 in 150
  - ii. Life Expectancy 1900: 47    Today: 78

#### **II. Income**

- a. Since 1900 it has grown at a 2% annual rate (quadrupling real per capita living standards in the last 100 years)
- b. 1900 by today's standards—1/2 the population lived in poverty. Today overall poverty rate less than 15%.
- c. A family living at the U.S. poverty level has an income 3 times the average per capita income for the world.

### **III.Recreation and Leisure**

- a. The fastest growing expenditure for American families has become recreation
- b. Today's average U.S. household spends 10 times as much on recreation as families 1900 and 3 times as much as families in 1950.
- c. Americans have 3 times more leisure time over the course of their lifetimes as our great grandparents.

### **IV.Housing**

- a. 1900: 1 in 5 homes had running water, flushing toilets, vacuum cleaner, or gas/electric heat.
- b. 1950: Fewer than 20% of homes had air conditioning, dishwasher, dryer, microwave oven. Today nearly 90% have all of these.
- c. These items are standard in American homes today.
- d. Homeownership has risen from 30% to 75% today.

### **V. Transportation**

- a. 1900: More horses than roads—a few hundred miles paved
- b. Today 90% of Americans own a vehicle.
- c. We drive 2.6 trillion miles per year. That's equal to driving to the moon and back 10 million times.
- d. Air travel safety: If you took 1 commercial flight per day you would not die for 21,000 years (according to the statistics)

### **VI.Conclusion**

- a. Today are healthier, we live longer, we are richer, we can afford to purchase more things, we have better jobs at better pay, we have more time and money for recreation, sports, the arts, we have bigger and better homes, we are at much less risk of catastrophic accidents, we breathe cleaner air, and drink safer water, the list could go on and on.
- b. The obvious question is why? The short answer is Freedom works!